

Washington, D.C. - Efforts to rejuvenate interest in the capture of Osama bin Laden and his terrorist counterparts received a major boost this week as the State Department's 'Rewards for Justice' program deployed an unconventional weapon in the war on terror.

Capitalizing on the broad reach of mass media, the United States is taking its message directly to millions of people. Newspaper, radio and television advertisements will run in native languages throughout remote regions of northwest Pakistan to turn up the heat in the search for Bin Laden. The ads promote a \$25 million reward for information leading to the capture of Bin Laden and another \$25 million for his top lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Newspaper ads, featuring pictures of Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, began running in six Pakistani publications last month and have already generated tips currently being vetted. This week marks the start of radio and television advertising campaigns, featuring a 30-second TV ad in Urdu, Pashto and Sindhi and radio spots recorded in Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi and Baloch. The television ads will air on local and satellite stations; radio spots will broadcast on local radio, Voice of America and Radio Pakistan.

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) authored the Counter-Terrorist and Narco-Terrorist Rewards Program Act (H.R. 3782) to bring more flexibility and innovation to the 'Rewards for Justice' program. The Act, enacted in December, permits the President to increase the rewards offered for information on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden and members of his outlaw terror networks from \$25 to \$50 million. Kirk's legislation led to the new mass media publicity campaign and to new ways people with information can safely collect their rewards.

Additionally, the legislation provides for program changes to attack new income sources for al Qaeda and other terror organizations – like the growing threat posed by the exploding production of heroin in Afghanistan.

"According to conventional wisdom, Osama bin Laden is hiding on the Afghan border in Pakistan," said Congressman Mark Kirk who led a congressional mission to Pakistan's North and South Waziristan last month to review how the reward program could be more effective in this remote, rural territory. "Most tribe members in North West Frontier Province cannot read or write. But we learned that people in this part of Asia are avid radio listeners. The flexibility in my legislation made it possible to broadcast radio and television ads in local languages,

explaining the rewards program and how someone can safely provide key information and perhaps the tip that leads to Bin Laden's capture."

The United States successfully used rewards to crack a number of terrorist cases in past years. Ramzi Yusef, an author of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was arrested on a tip given to the rewards program. Mir Amal Kasi, who killed Americans in Northern Virginia, was arrested in Pakistan on another tip. Saddam Hussein's two murderous sons, Uday and Qusai, met their end after a timely rewards program tip. In total, the United States has paid more than \$50 million in rewards for the arrest of people who murdered Americans or were United Nations war criminals.

"The United States has already invested billions supporting an international military coalition in Afghanistan to destroy al Qaeda training camps and create a new democracy under President Karzai," Kirk said. "Funding a rewards program to bring September 11's top criminal to justice is critical. To help stop future terrorist attacks, we must also target al Qaeda's new funding source through the sale of Afghan heroin – terrorists and drug dealers will earn more than \$6 billion this year from Afghanistan's bumper crop."

Kirk traveled to the rugged Afghan-Pakistan frontier in January 2004 for a first-hand look at the 'Rewards for Justice' program's implementation. Upon returning to the U.S., Congressman Kirk authored the recently-enacted legislation to reenergize the program, double rewards for the capture of terrorists and provide additional funding for counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer.

Cut off from his personal fortune and foreign donors, Bin Laden and his aides are increasingly reliant on the sale of Afghan heroin to fund their terrorist activities. The Congress approved over \$700 million in aid to Afghanistan over the next three years for interdiction programs, law enforcement, public information campaigns, poppy eradication, and programs to develop alternative livelihoods for farmers.

"We are not fighting a conventional war," Congressman Kirk said. "In the war against terrorism, we must be open to innovative and unconventional approaches to capturing Bin Laden and arresting drug kingpins who finance his terror. This program could improve our chances to capturing the world's most wanted man."

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